

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 07352 280314Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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R 271135Z JUL 78  
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AMEMBASSY  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMCONSUL LAHORE  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7352

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PK  
SUBJECT: LOCAL ELECTIONS SPARK INTEREST

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 6232 (B) ISLAMABAD A-79 (C) ISLAMABAD A-78

1. SUMMARY: IN PREPARATION FOR CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR  
(COZA) GENERAL ZIA'S PROMISED LOCAL BODIES POLLS, THE GOP HAS  
ANNOUNCED A PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THE LOCAL  
POLLS, NOW SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER, HAVE BECOME PAKISTAN'S  
LATEST POLITICAL FOOTBALL. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE GOP CONTINUES TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE CMLA'S MWROMISE  
TO HOLD LOCAL ELECTIONS BY YEAR'S END (REF A). THE  
FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS TAKEN UP BY THE NEW MINISTER FOR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (PML) LEADER  
CHAUDHRY ZAHUR ELACI, WAS TO DECIDE ON A PREFERRED NEW  
STRUCTURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (REF B). ELAHI ANNOUNCED  
HIS PLAN JULY 24, TELLING A NEWS CONFERENCE THAT:

-- LOCAL BODIES POLLS WOULD BE HALD "AS FAR AS POSSIBLE" BY DECEMBER, 1978;

-- SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS, A THREE-TIER STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE STABLISHED, MADE UP OF UNION COUNCILS (ONE REPRESENTATIVE FOR EVERY 1,000-1,500 PEOPLE), MARKAZ COUNCILS (EIGHT TO TEN UNION COUNCILS), AND DISTRICT COUNCILS. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED;

-- WOMEN, WORKERS, AND PEASANTS WILL BE GRANTED FIVE PARCENT REPESENTATION AT THE MARKAZ AND DISTRICT LEVELS.

3. ELAHI NOTED THAT THE EXISTING ELECTORAL ROLLS WILL BE USED. THE MINISTER CONFIRMED (REF C) THAT THE PREPARATION OF NEW ROLLS WOULD TAKE UNTIL NEXT MARCH OR APRIL. IT IS UNCLEAR, HOWEVER, HOW THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO GUARANTEE REPRESENTATION TO MINORITIES, WOMEN, WORKERS, AND PEASANTS WHILE USING THE PRESENT UNIFIED ELCTORAL ROLLS.

4. THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT POLLS WOULD BE HELD IN DECEMBER HAS SPARKED FIERCE CRITICISM FROM THE POLITICIANS. PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA) LEADER MUFTI MAHMOOD WAS FIRST OFF THE MARK, CLAIMING THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS IS A "CRUDE JOKE" WHICH WOULD "FORM THE BASIS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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A RETURN TO THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM" UNDER AYUB. MUFTI AGAIN CALLED ON THE MLA TO SET A DATE FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS. CHIEF OF THE JAMAAT-I-ULEMA-PAKISTAN, MAULANA NOORANI, TOLD NEWSMEN JULY 26 THAT LOCAL ELECTIONS WOULD CREATE CHAOS IN THE COUNTRY. HE CHARGED THAT LOCAL BODIES POLLS WERE A "FARCE", AND DESIGNED ONLY TO POSTPONE NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

5. THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP) HAS BEEN SILENT THUS FAR, ALTHOUGH MOST OBSERVERS ASSUME THAT THE PPP, AT LEAST THE PRO-BHUTTO FACTION, WILL OPPOSE ANYTHING LESS THAN NATIONAL POLLS. ONE INDICATION OF PPP FEELING IS (#)

IN THE PRO-PPP RAWALPINDI DAILY TAMEER, WHICH CLAIMS THAT POLICE OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO WATCH OUT FOR "DISRUPTIVE ELEMENTS," WITH A VIEW TOWARD SECURING A "POSITIVE RESULT" IN THE LOCAL BODIES POLLS.

6. COMMENT: THE VEHEMENT CRITICISM LEVELED AT THE MLA FOR ITS LOCAL ELECTION PLAN APPEARS BASED ON THREE FACTORS:

--THE FEAR THAT THE MLA IS DETERMINED TO RETURN TO

AYUB'S BASIC DEMOCRACIES STYLE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS IDENTIFIED IN THE POLITICIANS' MIND WITH LONG TERM MILITARY RULE;

--THE FEAR THAT THE MLA WILL USE LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLLS TO DEFLECT CALLS FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS;

--THE CONCERN THAT UNDER THE PRESENT TOTAL PROHIBITION ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND PRONOUNCEMENTS LOCAL BODIES POLLS WILL BE SOMETHING LESS THAN AN EXERCISE OF POPULAR CHOICE AMONG ALTERNATIVES.

7. WHILE OBSERVERS IN ISLAMABAD, PERHAPS REFLECTING THEIR BUREAUCRATIC BIAS, TOUT LOCAL ELECTIONS AS A WAY TO LET OFF PENT-UP OLITICAL STEAM, CONGEN KARACHI NOTES THAT LOCAL CONFIDENTIAL

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ELECTIONS ARE OFTEN VIOLENT AFFAIRS, AND THAT THE LOCAL POLLS MIGHT INCREASE RATHER THAN REDUCE POLITICAL TENTIONS.

8. THE GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO PURSUE (ALBEIT PERHAPS MORE CAUTIOUSLY) IT SPLANS FOR LOCAL POLLS EVEN IN THE FACE OF CRITICISM. CMLA ZIA HAS PROMISED THE POLLS, AND AFTER HIS CANCELLATION OF THE OCTOBER, 1977 ELCTIONS, HE WOULD PROBABLY BE LOATH TO BACK OUT AGAIN. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT THE PML, PRESENTLY ZIA'S ONPT POLITICAL PARTNER IN THE CABINET, IS KEEN TO HAVE LOCAL BODIES POLLS, WHERE THEY THINK - RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY - THEY CAN SHOW POLITICAL STRENGTH. END COMMENT.

9. ELSEWHERE ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, CMLA ZIA MET JULY 26 WITH PNA PRESIDENT MUFTI MAHMOOD TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. AS HAS BECOMY THE CUSTOM IN THE LENGTHENING HISTORY OF THE ZIA-MUFTI DIALOGUE, BOTH SIDES SAID ONLY THAT THESWWULD MEET AGAIN. THE PNA EXECUTIVE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET AUGUST 3 IN RAWALPINDI TO CONSIDER THE PAHYNAL GOVERNMENT QUESTION YET AGAIN. HUMMEL

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## Message Attributes

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